



Housing Plan Implementation Committee

Date: January 20, 2021

Time: 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Pam Hallett, Karen Kelleher, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Guests: Len Diggins (Select Board).

The purpose of the Committee meeting is discuss any additional articles that the HPIC would want to put forward. Patricia strongly recommended that the HPIC sponsor a tenant right of first refusal program. Erin noted that it would have to a home rule petition as the Governor pocket vetoed this provision in the Economic Development bill that he recently signed into law.

Karen expressed that a policy such as this one would take a significant amount of work, but it would be a bold move toward tenant protections. Karen indicated that advocates are still pursuing a local option, and the Governor may be inclined to sign into a law a narrower version of what he vetoed. Pam did not think there would be enough time to pursue this. Len asked if there is a disadvantage in pursuing this now or later. Karen thought that some credibility could be lost if the Governor's questions are not answered.

The Committee discussed the home rule petition process. Erin explained that a community's delegation would file legislation for the Legislature to consider. From her understanding, if the home rule petition comes up for consideration there is deference to the local community if the local delegation is supportive. Erin is unsure how a home rule petition would interface with a similar piece of legislation that was previously vetoed.

Karen indicated that she would want to start a conversation around tenant protections in the community as the conversation continues at the state level. There are a lot of obstacles for tenants to do this now, but the Town could work with property owners in the community to create opportunities. The affordable housing trust fund could look into this in more detail. Pam suggested including this in educational forums that might be upcoming.

Pam inquired whether there is a pathway that would require 40B projects to have a certain percentage of the affordable units be at a lower threshold. Erin indicated that she believes it would have to be a resolution that Town Meeting to vote on and she

would ask whether there is another pathway. Erin noted that the comment has come up relative to Thorndike Place and the project at 1165R Mass Ave. There is the potential for the ZBA to condition the projects to require a lower threshold of affordability as part of the Comprehensive Permit.

Karen noted that she would be interested in having more public discussion on low and very low income housing, and how to make it happen. She asked if there has been any conversation about project based Section 8 vouchers with the Housing Authority. Pam indicated that HCA has applied for project based vouchers from the Housing Authority. Patricia noted that she was uncertain how much credibility we would have in discussing low and very low income housing considering Karen's amendment that was adopted as part of the trust to bring the affordability threshold to 100% of the area median income. Karen indicated that the Committee has the duty to implement housing production plan for a wide range needs and population, including very low income people. She indicated that it is very hard to create affordable housing, and different tools can create housing for a variety of income levels. The amendment to give the trust the same flexibility that is afforded from the CPA is important should the town want to pursue moderate income housing, which is called for by the housing production plan. Karen indicated that the amendment was not advocating for higher or moderate income housing to the exclusion of low income housing is inaccurate and is antithetical to the cooperation that is needed by the Committee to complete work.

Erin noted that there is a potential warrant article to reverse the housing trust to how it was originally written at 80 percent of the area median income.

Erin provided an update regarding the projected that CDBG funding was requested for including a nexus study to review the inclusionary zoning bylaw, to review housing and non-housing needs of low income, very low income, and unsheltered individuals in the community, as well as in particular seniors.

Erin also provided an updated on the Real Estate Transfer Fee Coalition and the engagement efforts. She and Jenny are still working to put together an informational forum and a potential joint meeting of the Select Board and the ARB. She indicated that she will be reviewing the Consensus bill and completing a comparison with the article for consideration by the Committee as well as updating calculations with 2020 sales data and median sales prices. Erin indicated that she will circulate the information.

Patricia asked if there was any resolution about Len's participation on the Committee due to the Town Manager Act. Erin indicated that Town Counsel has not provided any direction, but she is glad to have Len's participation and involvement as a guest. Len indicated that Patricia sent correspondence to the Select Board and she could follow up on it. Patricia asked Len to follow up with Town Counsel.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.